

What is claimed is:

1. A method for providing to business management a plan for implementing an employee suggestion, the method comprising:

obtaining over a computer network a structured response from an employee

5 of the business; and

determining the network routing of data from the structured response to business management based upon entries of the response.

10 2. The method according to claim 1, wherein the structured response is developed through a series of templates wherein at least one template is selected based upon responses from at least one prior template.

15 3. The method according to claim 2, wherein a template will be provided based upon a selected type of proposal.

4. The method according to claim 3, wherein the type of proposal may be selected from one of the group of cost saving, revenue generation, quality improvement, safety improvement, customer service improvement, policy change and advertising or corporate slogan.

15 5. The method according to claim 2, wherein the template for the selected type of proposal provides for entry of cost savings information.

20 6. The method according to claim 2, wherein the template for the selected type of proposal provides access to a database containing cost information.

7. The method according to claim 2 wherein a template is provided based upon a selected department of the business.

25 8. The method according to claim 2 wherein a financial template is provided based upon the type of proposal selected.

9. The method according to claim 8, further comprising calculating a financial benefit based upon submissions in the financial template.

10. The method according to claim 9 further comprising obtaining financial data requested from the network.

11. The method according to claim 10 wherein access to financial data is controlled through an employee's log-in for the computer network.

30 12. The method according to claim 10 wherein if no financial data is available in a

- database associated with the network and the employee enters financial data in a template the method further comprises: adding the financial data to the cost database for a subsequent employee suggestion.
13. The method according to claim 1, wherein determining the network routing is dependent in part on a business group that is selected on a template by the employee.
14. The method according to claim 1, wherein determining the network routing is dependent in part on an employee's response to whether the suggestion has a financial benefit.
15. The method according to claim 1 wherein determining the network routing is dependent in part on a selected department affected by the employee suggestion.
16. The method according to claim 1 wherein determining the network routing is dependent in part on whether the employee indicates that the suggestion is a team suggestion.
17. The method according to claim 1, wherein determining the network routing is dependent in part on an idea type selected by the employee on a template.
18. The method according to claim 2, wherein a template provides an employee with selectable items having associated financial information.
19. The method according to claim 19, wherein a processor determines the net financial impact based upon the one or more selectable items selected.
20. The method according to claim 19, wherein the processor obtains financial information from a business database based upon the selected selectable items.
21. The method according to claim 18 wherein an employee may add one or more financial impact items and request financial information from the business database about the financial impact items.
22. The method according to claim 2, further comprising receiving information from a template at a processor wherein the information contains financial data about a financial impact item and adding the financial data about the financial impact item to a business database.
23. The method according to claim 2, wherein a template is provided which allows an employee to enter one or more potential implementers of the employee

- suggestion.
24. The method according to claim 23, wherein determining the network routing is dependent in part upon the one or more potential implementers selected.
25. The method according to claim 1, wherein determining the network routing is  
5 dependent in part upon a deadline selected by the employee.
26. The method according to claim 1 wherein determining the network routing is dependent in part upon information about the employee submitting the idea.
27. The method according to claim 26, wherein such information may include the department of the business that the employee works in.
28. The method according to claim 1, further comprising: receiving over a network a structured reply to the structured response from one or more members of business management.
29. The method according to claim 28, wherein the structured reply is based upon response by business management to one or more templates.
30. The method according to claim 28, wherein business management is sent cost information from a cost database associated with a processor.
31. The method according to claim 28, wherein receipt of the structured reply causes a processor to contact the employee submitting the structured suggestion.
32. The method according to claim 31, wherein the processor contacts the  
20 employee via e-mail.
33. The method according to claim 28, wherein the processor routes a new template to the employee requesting more information about the employee suggestion in response to the structured reply.
34. The method according to claim 1, further comprising:  
25 maintaining an employee suggestion log in memory associated with the processor.
35. The method according to claim 34, wherein the employee suggestion log contains information entered by the employee on a series of templates, information regarding routing of the employee suggestion and status of the employee  
30 suggestion.
36. The method according to claim 2, wherein a template is provided to the

employee for entering information regarding implementation of the employee suggestion.

37. The method according to claim 36, wherein the information regarding implementation includes identification of possible implementers.
- 5 38. The method according to claim 37, further comprising: after receiving information from business management indicating acceptance of the employee suggestion, sending via the computer network information about the employee suggestion to the possible implementers.
39. The method according to claim 1, if a deadline for response to the employee suggestion expires, sending a reminder via the computer network to the business management that received the employee suggestion.
40. The method according to claim 1, wherein determining network routing is based in part on workload of the business management.
41. The method according to claim 34, upon request by the employee submitting the employee suggestion, providing a displayable version of the employee suggestion log via the computer network to a computer associated with the employee submitting the suggestion.
42. A method for idea management of a business, the method comprising:
  - receiving into a processor from a computer network a request for submission of a structured idea from an employee of the business
  - 20 sending from the processor to a computing device of the requesting employee a template allowing for employee selection of at least an idea type
  - sending from the processor to the computing device of the requesting employee a template based at least upon the selected idea type
  - determining a recipient of information gathered from the templates regarding the structured idea and
  - 25 sending the information to the recipient.
43. The method according to claim 2 based on an idea type selected by the employee on a template a subsequent template is selected.
- 30 44. The method according to claim 2 further comprising:
  - Receiving a signal requesting a coach for assisting with at least one

submission to a template.

45. The method according to claim 45 further comprising:  
contacting a coach based in part upon information submitted by the employee  
in one or more templates.

- 5 46. A computer program product having computer readable code thereon for  
providing to business management a plan for implementing an employee  
suggestion, the computer program product comprising:  
computer code for obtaining over a computer network a structured response  
from an employee of the business; and  
computer code for determining the network routing of data from the  
structured response to business management based upon entries of the response.

47. The computer program product according to claim 46, further comprising:  
computer code for selecting a series of templates to develop the structured  
response wherein at least one template is selected based upon responses from  
at least one prior template.
48. The computer program product according to claim 47, further comprising  
computer code for selecting a next template based at least upon a selected  
type of proposal.
49. The computer program product according to claim 48, wherein at least one of  
the templates contains a field for selecting the type of proposal from the  
group of cost saving, revenue generation, quality improvement, safety  
improvement, customer service improvement, policy change and advertising  
or corporate slogan.
50. The computer program product according to claim 49, wherein the template  
for the selected type of proposal provides for entry of cost savings information.
- 25 51. The computer program product according to claim 49, wherein at least one of  
the templates provides for access to a database containing cost information.
52. The computer program product according to claim 47 wherein a template is  
chosen based upon a selected department of the business.
- 30 53. The computer program product according to claim 47 wherein a financial  
template is provided based upon the type of proposal selected.

- 5           54. The computer program product according to claim 53, further comprising computer code for calculating a financial benefit based upon one or more transmitted submissions from the financial template.
- 5           55. The computer program product according to claim 47 further comprising: computer code for obtaining financial data requested from the network.
- 5           56. The computer program product according to claim 55 wherein access to financial data is controlled through an employee's log-in for the computer network.
- 10           57. The computer program product according to claim 56 wherein if no financial data is available in a database associated with the network and the employee enters financial data in a template the computer program product further comprises: computer code for adding the financial data to the cost database for a subsequent employee suggestion.
- 15           58. The computer program product according to claim 46, wherein in the computer code for determining the network routing, the network routing is determined in part on a business group that is selected on a template by the employee.
- 20           59. The computer program product according to claim 46, wherein in the computer code for determining the network routing, the network routing is dependent in part on an employee's response to whether the suggestion has a financial benefit.
- 25           60. The computer program product according to claim 46, wherein in the computer code for determining the network routing, the network routing is dependent in part on a selected department affected by the employee suggestion.
61. The computer program product according to claim 46, wherein in the computer code for determining the network routing, the network routing is dependent in part on whether the employee indicates that the suggestion is a team suggestion.
- 30           62. The computer program product according to claim 46, wherein in the computer code for determining the network routing, the network routing is

- dependent in part on an idea type selected by the employee on a template.
63. The computer program product according to claim 47, wherein a template provides an employee with selectable items having associated financial information.
- 5 64. The computer program product according to claim 63, having computer code for determining the net financial impact based upon the one or more selected selectable items having associated financial information.
65. The computer program product according to claim 64, further comprising computer code for obtaining financial information from a cost database based upon the selected selectable items.
66. The computer program product according to claim 65 further comprising computer code for sending a request for financial information about one or more financial impact items to one or more sources.
67. The computer program product according to claim 47, further comprising; computer code for receiving information from a template wherein the information contains financial data about a financial impact item; and computer code for adding the financial data about the financial impact item to a cost database.
68. The computer program product according to claim 47, wherein a template is provided which allows an employee to enter one or more potential implementers of the employee suggestion.
- 20 69. The computer program product according to claim 68, wherein the computer code for determining the network routing is dependent in part upon the one or more potential implementers selected.
- 25 70. The computer program product according to claim 47, wherein the computer code for determining the network routing is dependent in part upon a deadline selected by the employee.
71. The computer program product according to claim 47 wherein the computer code for determining the network routing is dependent in part upon information about the employee submitting the idea.
- 30 72. The computer program product according to claim 71, wherein such

information may include the department of the business that the employee works in.

73. The computer program product according to claim 47, further comprising:  
computer code for receiving over a network a structured reply to the structured  
response from one or more members of business management.

5 74. The computer program product according to claim 73, wherein the structured  
reply is based upon response by business management to one or more templates.

75. The computer program product according to claim 73, further comprising  
computer code for sending business management cost information from a cost  
database.

10 76. The computer program product according to claim 73, further comprising  
computer code for sending a message to the employee submitting the structured  
suggestion upon receipt of the structured reply.

77. The computer program product according to claim 75, further comprising code  
for sending the message via electronic mail.

15 78. The computer program product according to claim 73, further comprising  
computer code for routing a new template to the employee requesting more  
information about the employee suggestion in response to the structured reply.

79. The computer program product according to claim 46, further comprising:  
maintaining an employee suggestion log in memory.

20 80. The computer program product according to claim 79, wherein the employee  
suggestion log contains information entered by the employee on a series of  
templates, information regarding routing of the employee suggestion and status  
of the employee suggestion.

81. The computer program product according to claim 47, further comprising  
25 computer code for providing a template to the employee for entering information  
regarding implementation of the employee suggestion.

82. The computer program product according to claim 81, wherein the information  
regarding implementation includes identification of possible implementers.

30 83. The computer program product according to claim 82, further comprising:  
computer code for sending via the computer network information about the  
employee suggestion to the possible implementers, after receiving information

- from business management indicating acceptance of the employee suggestion.
84. The computer program product according to claim 46, further comprising:  
computer code for sending a reminder via the computer network to the  
business management that received the employee suggestion if a deadline for  
5 response to the employee suggestion expires.
85. The computer program product according to claim 46, wherein network routing  
is based in part on workload of the business management.
86. The computer program product according to claim 79, further comprising:  
computer code for providing a displayable version of the employee  
suggestion log via the computer network, upon receipt of a request by the employee  
submitting the employee suggestion.
87. A computer program product on a computer readable medium having computer  
code thereon for idea management of a business, the computer code comprising:  
computer code for receiving from a computer network a request for  
submission of a structured idea from an employee of the business  
computer code for sending to a computing device of the requesting employee  
a template allowing for employee selection of at least an idea type  
computer code for sending to the computing device of the requesting  
employee a template based at least upon the selected idea type;  
20 computer code for determining a recipient of information gathered from the  
templates regarding the structured idea; and  
computer code for sending the information to the recipient.
88. The computer program product according to claim 2 based on an idea type  
selected by the employee on a template a subsequent template is selected.
- 25 89. The computer program product according to claim 46 further comprising:  
computer code for receiving a signal requesting a coach for assisting with at  
least one submission to a template.
90. The computer program product according to claim 89 further comprising:  
computer code for sending a message to the coach based in part upon information  
30 submitted by the employee in one or more templates.
91. A method for providing an idea submission in a business, the method

comprising:

providing a plurality of templates to an employee, wherein the templates require one or more responses;

5 receiving a completed set of templates from the employee creating a structured idea;

determining the routing of the structured idea based at least in part upon the one or more responses.

92. A method according to claim 91, further comprising:

providing an evaluation template to a party based upon the determined routing.

93. The method according to claim 92, further comprising receiving a completed evaluation template from the party; and

routing the idea to an implementer if the idea is approved, wherein the routing is determined in part on the completed evaluation template.